

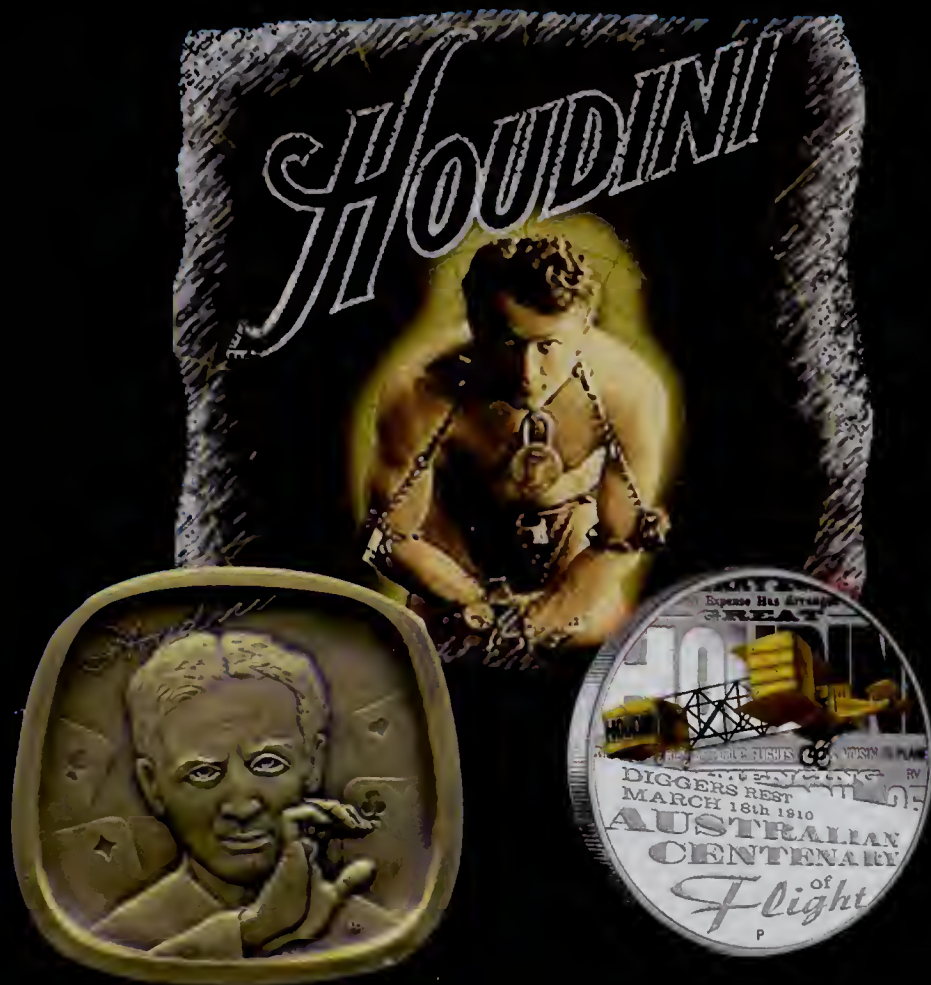
THE

ל'פ"ה

SHEKEL



The Journal of Israel and Jewish History and Numismatics
Volume 47 No. 5 September October 2014



Master of Mystery

- *Raoul Wallenberg's rich medal legacy*
- *1898 Alabama bank check revealing*
- *Ancient stone weights preceded coinage*
- *AINA at the ANA, August 2014: report, photos*

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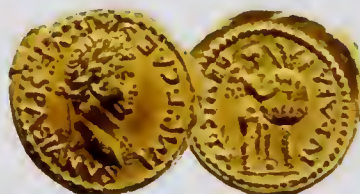
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OFFICERS

Mel Wacks, President and Editor-in-Chief
Contact Mel via E-mail: ainapresident@gmail.com

or call him: (818) 225-1348

Josh Prottas, Vice-President

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GENERAL CONTACT

Donna Sims, P.O. Box 20255, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269

E-mail: dancinazdonna@gmail.com

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ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In the early days of AINA, there were over 20 Israel coin clubs around the country. I believe that we even had one in Alaska!

Alas, they are all gone now, but I would like AINA members to still feel that they are members of a club. If you ever have a question about something you read in *The Shekel* or anywhere else, or about a coin, medal, etc. in your collection, contact me and if I don't know the answer I will forward your inquiry to an expert.

If you are interested in selling a coin collection containing Israel or Judaic material, or any numismatic material from the United States or elsewhere, contact one of our advertisers for help (and mention that you saw their ad in *The Shekel*).

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And if you have something to say, write a letter to the editor or submit an article.

We welcome your suggestions, questions and ideas!



It will soon be time to renew your AINA membership for 2015 (if you haven't yet paid or are a life member).



You won't want to miss out on some very special issues of *The Shekel* that we are planning for you. I can't tell you more yet, but I promise these issues will be worth several times your dues.

Lastly, we would greatly appreciate if you would give AINA memberships as gifts to others (from 9-99) who might enjoy reading about Israel and Jewish history and numismatics.

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Number One Money Man Judaica

Denmark Ag



High relief silver medal (45 grams - 40mm) commemorates 50th anniversary of Danish Jewish community escape from the clutches of Germans. Created by Danish artist, engraver and medalist Bent Jensen, this piece features a reverse of Holger Danske, a national hero, and an obverse with Jews between the maps of Denmark and Sweden.

Houghton

Works of Art from Houghton Jews - Hardcover Christie's London, 8 December 1994. Edition provides extensive information about Philip & Sybil Sassoon and their magnificent holdings. 361pp; near perfect condition; no folds, notations or markings. Unopened.

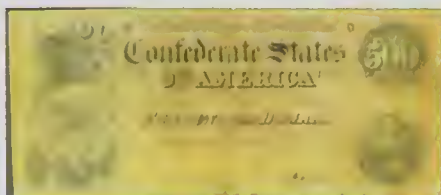


Herzl Passport



1850 Franz Joseph I official passport for Israel Herzl (24x40 cm). Sealed with signed revenue stamp, dated 1850. In 1815, Austria emerged from Napoleonic Wars as a powerhouse; the Hapsburgs returned to rule. This single-page passport (Reise-Pass) bears all information about Israel Herzl, including name, character, birthplace, birth year, religion, stature, hair color etc. All signed by the Gov. & General Commander of the Serbian region of Timis, western Romania and Banate, Southern Hungary. Finely printed in large format (about 9x16 inches) in blue with a decorative border. Document dated 1850, sealed with signed revenue stamp. Theodore (Tivadar/Binyamin Ze'ev) Herzl was born in Pest (the other side of Buda - Hungary), his family had come from Zemun (present day Serbia, by Belgrade on the Danube). But Herzl was a common name, so it could be a relative or not.

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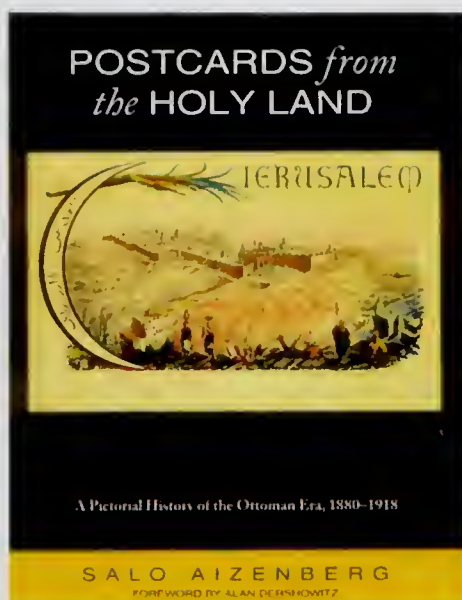
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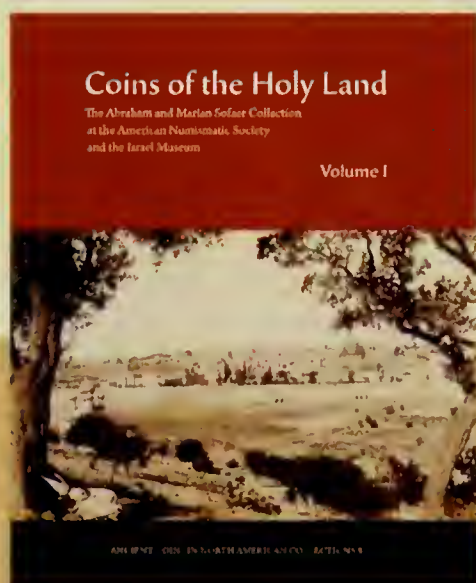
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The journal, *The Israel Philatelist*, is published 6 times a year.



Coins of the Holy Land:

The Abraham and Marian Sofaer Collection at the American Numismatic Society and the Israel Museum

American Numismatic Society Publications

Hardcover, 2 Volumes,
Vol. 1: 344 pp. Vol. 2: 244 pp., 238 plates
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Ancient Coins in North American Collections 8 (ACNAC 8) 2013

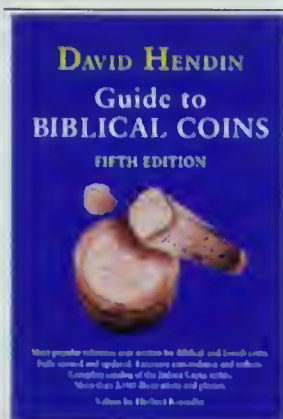
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The book was written by Ya'akov Meshorer with Gabriela Bijovsky and Wolfgang Fischer-Bossert, and edited by David Hendin and Andrew Meadows.

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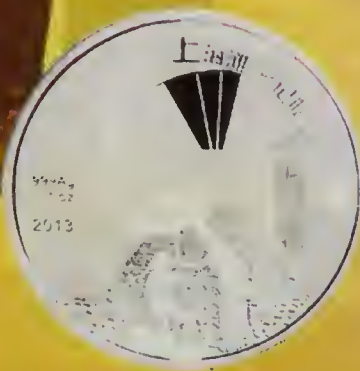


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Rocky Zhao and Qiming Zhao present 92 year old Gary Matzdorff with etched set #39 in China. In 1939, Gary was fortunate to escape Germany and find refuge in Shanghai. In 1948, he settled in America.

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The bravest step forward

By Andrew Peralá

When situations are most dire, and life itself is on the line, uncommon heroes sometimes step forward and risk all to save others. Their extraordinary courage in the face of hopeless odds we remember long after the bravest stepped forward. With memorials and medals, we remember.

Courage from an inner wellspring previously unknown is the hallmark of those who sacrifice all, and this was especially true of Raoul Wallenberg, who began his extraordinary mission to



Above: Raoul Wallenberg; Above, left: The "Shoes along the Danube" sculpture of cast-iron shoes honors Jews executed on the riverbank in 1944. Top right: Obverse of the Raoul Wallenberg medal sculpted by Marika Somogyi for the Magnes Museum.

Continued

All medal images courtesy Severin Sperling, author of "A Catalog of Holocaust Medals."

*SOMETIMES THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE
MUST BE MADE.*

*FOR PEOPLE OF CONSCIENCE,
RAOUL WALLENBERG IS A MAN
WHO BECAME AN ICON OF HOPE
AND COURAGE BEYOND MEASURE*



Mark Salman of Israel designed and sculpted this 125mm x 145mm medal cast in bronze in 1994. The obverse is a portrait of Raoul Wallenberg. The reverse inscription is in Russian.



The English translation of the Russian text on the reverse of Mark Salman's tribute medal to Raoul Wallenberg reads "Raoul Wallenberg 1912 - ... Architect, Diplomat, Humanist, XX Century Prisoner of the Gulag."

Continued

rescue men, women and children from the fires of the Holocaust as an unassuming Swedish diplomat posted deep in the heart of the Nazi wehrmacht.

Bold, yet bald; strong, yet thin and born into a world of wealth and social predominance in Sweden, in June 1944 Raoul Wal-

lenberg took a low-paying Civil Service job in the Diplomat corps of the Swedish government.

His first assignment: Budapest, Hungary.

Officially, Wallenberg was an attache at the Swedish legation in Budapest. But his true mission was hidden: Raoul Wallenberg

Continued

MICHIGAN MEDAL HONORS FAMOUS ALUM



Above and top right: Awarded annually by the University of Michigan since its 1990 inception, the Wallenberg Medal honors humanitarians whose work has had a global impact. Raoul Wallenberg was a member of the university's School of Architecture Class of 1935.

Continued

also was the representative of the newly created U.S. War Refugee Board whose mission was to save European Jews from the hands of Adolf Eichmann and the concentration camps spread throughout German-occupied Europe.

Wallenberg was a good fit for this assignment. A Swedish national, and thus belonging a non-aligned national legation, Wallenberg also had been educated in the U.S., attending the College of Architecture at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he was a member of the Class of 1935. A fellow classmate of that



Photographs courtesy the Regents of the University of Michigan
Agnes Heller, distinguished philosopher, humanist, activist, Holocaust Survivor, and winner of the 2014 Wallenberg Medal, awarded by Raoul Wallenberg's U.S. alma mater, the University of Michigan.

year: future U.S. President Gerald Ford.

The University of Michigan is home to an annual series of Wallenberg Lectures, and grants an annual honor: the Wallenberg Medal (see above). The medal

Continued

A LEGEND FROM THOUSANDS SAVED

Continued

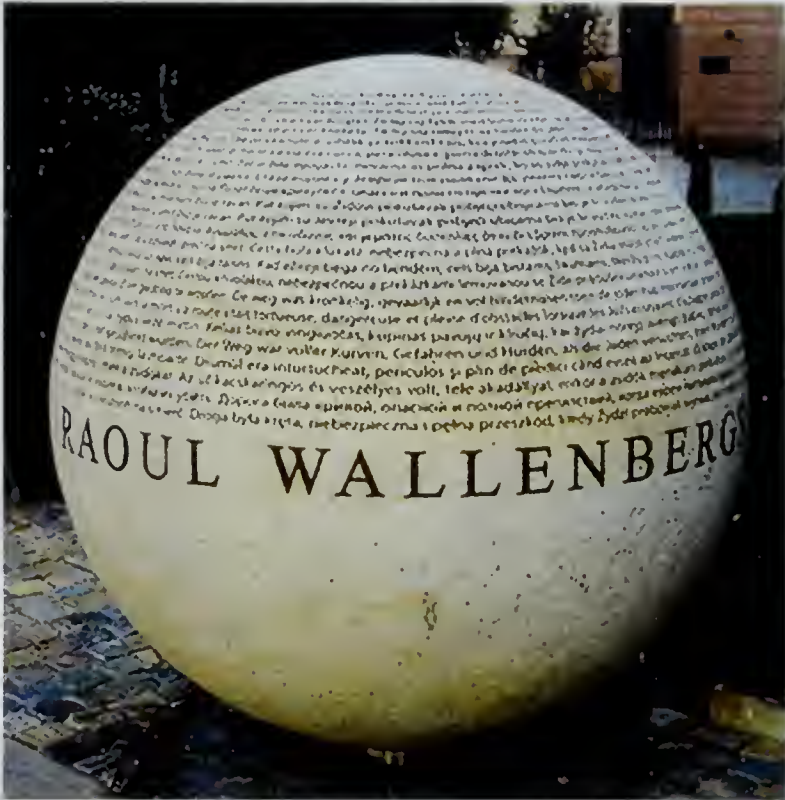
is bronze, plated with gold. The obverse of the medal has a portrait of Wallenberg with the legend, “One Person Can Make a Difference.” The reverse portrays the official seal of the University of Michigan and the legend “Raoul Wallenberg, Class of 1935.”

According to the University of Michigan website (<http://wallenberg.umich.edu/>), each Wallenberg lecture is given by a distinguished architect or historian whose talk is in conjunction with the awarding of the Wallenberg Medal to a humanitarian whose work has extended across national and ethnic boundaries.

The 2014 honoree, Agnes Heller, is a distinguished philosopher and Holocaust Survivor who received her medal on Sept. 30, 2014, in Ann Arbor.

The medal is the creation, and gift, Jon Rush, a “professor of art and design at the University of Michigan (who) first learned about Raoul Wallenberg because the School of Art and Design had been part of the College of Architecture where Wallenberg was a student.

“When Rush learned that a committee had been formed to present



Above: A stone globe honors Raoul Wallenberg in Stockholm. Below, a “safe pass” issued to Lili Katz by Wallenberg in Budapest on Aug. 25, 1944.



Continued

WALLENBERG'S STORY RESONATES TODAY



Above: A portrait of Raoul Wallenberg on the obverse of a medal designed and sculpted by Marika Somogy for the Magnes Museum. Above, right: The medal's reverse.

Continued

a medal to outstanding humanitarians, he contacted the Wallenberg Committee and offered to donate the medal itself. He designed the medal, made the model, and oversaw its production.”

After studying at the University of Michigan, Wallenberg began what would become three years of working at a bank in Palestine, a period that likely heightened his awareness of the nation of Israel and the extraordinary dangers faced by Jews in pre-WWII Europe.

In 1944, at the request of the United States War Refugee Board, the Swedish government sent Raoul Wallenberg to Budapest as First Secretary of the Swedish Legation.

By the time he reached Budapest, 400,000 men, women and

children had already been deported from the provinces. Now, only about 200,000 Jews remained in the capital. Wallenberg redesigned Sweden's safe pass (Shutzpass) and liberally distributed this special document to thousands of persons marked for extinction.

The situation was beyond dire - as reported in a lengthy documentary on the public television network PBS, life for Jews in Hungary “was hell” and only getting worse.

Wallenberg realized immediately the dangers and the need to act. Within a month of his July 1944 arrival, he had persuaded his superiors in the Swedish government that action had to be taken. With their permission, he created a plan that resulted in the saving of thousands of lives.

Continued

WALLENBERG GAVE OUT 20,000 SAFE PASSES



At right: In 1944, at the Jozsefvarosi train station in Budapest, Raoul Wallenberg (at right, with hands clasped behind his back) rescues Hungarian Jews by giving them safe passes.



A 1992 70mm-diameter medal cast in bronze and designed by Mark Salzman of Israel honors Raoul Wallenberg as an architect, humanist and diplomat who disappeared in the post-World War II Soviet Gulag.

Continued

The plan involved more than the issuance of 20,000 Swedish “safe pass” papers in just six months.

With funds provided by the United States, Wallenberg purchased numerous buildings in Budapest which were designated “Safe Houses” under the protection of Sweden. Wallenberg saw

the immensity of the challenge, and ramped up his own efforts to counter the threat of mass murder, setting up his own relief section, with a staff of 40 that eventually expanded to 400.

Huge deliveries of food were sent to the ghetto everyday. He even persuaded Hungary’s not to

Continued

RISKING HIS OWN LIFE, HE SAVED OTHERS



A medal issued by the Judaic Heritage Society in 1980 honors Raoul Wallenberg for his heroism and service to the Jewish people. The 38 mm-diameter medal was designed by Oldrich Teply and Karen Worth and struck in bronze, silver plated bronze, solid sterling silver and gold by the Medalic Art Company.

Continued

force the Jews wear the yellow star.

These actions placed Wallenberg in personal danger more than once, the PBS documentary notes.

Wallenberg is reported to have boarded the deportation trains, passing out as many safe passes as he could and then demanding the release of the holders of safe passes to be allowed to leave the train.

Wallenberg's actions did not go unnoticed by the governments of Hungary or of Germany.

At the time of his arrival in Budapest, Hungary had in place a moderate overnment that not only would consider signing an armistice with the approaching Allied armies (in October 1944) but which had resisted deporting Jews

as the Nazis demanded.

Adolf Eichmann was sent to Hungary to oversee the deportations. One of the most loathsome humans in history, Eichmann worked behind the scenes as well, and likely was a significant player in the removal of the moderate Hungarian head of state Miklós Horthy from power after the Armistice.

Eichmann moved swiftly once Horthy was gone, replacing both him and his government with a puppet regime headed by the the fascist Ferenc Szalasi.

Szalasi's anti-Semitic Arrow Cross party then unleashed a full-scale reign of terror on Hungary's Jewish people, killing more than 10,000 in the streets of Budapest as well as executing them along

Continued

RED ARMY ADVANCE THREATENED MORE



Soldiers of the Soviet Red Army enter Budapest in February 1945.

Continued

the banks of the river Danube.

As the PBS documentary reported, Wallenberg was in the thick of the action, wading into columns of Jews being marched to slave labor and concentration camps in Austria.

Wallenberg carried medical supplies and food, and rescued as many as he could with Swedish safe papers that he handed out to marchers.

During his brief stay in Budapest, Wallenberg was tireless. The work was not without its toll. He frequently wrote letters home. In one letter to his mother he lamented, "Everywhere you see tragedies

of the greatest proportions. But the days and nights are so full of work that one seldom has time to react."

There was another incident that was not only fraught with extreme danger but which must have been one of the most extraordinary encounters of WWII, when both Wallenberg and Eichmann found themselves invited to the same dinner in December 1944.

The two antagonists exchanged harsh words, but Wallenberg did not back down. Eichmann had met his match - at least in diplomatic maneuvers.

But in the short term, Eichmann

Continued

COURAGEOUS BEYOND MEASURE



This medal honors Raoul Wallenberg as a righteous gentile diplomat. The medal was designed by Alex Shagin of the United States and Igal Gabai of Israel and issued by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation in 2003-2004. The medal was struck by the Hecht Ltd in Israel in 59 mm-diameter bronze and 50 mm-diameter silver.

Continued

would prevail. He had returned to Budapest on October 17 to organise the death marches where men, women and children would march for days, and anyone who fell from exhaustion was beaten to death, or shot.

It was during these marches that Wallenberg immediately took action, saving as many as he could.

Time after time, he gave food and encouragement to the exhausted. Raoul would shout at the officers to release the Swedish pass-holders.

Even at this point, documents were being given out while the officials were busy discussing with Raoul. Despite all of his efforts, at least thousands out of hundreds of thousands were saved, and the death marches continued up until

November 24 1944, when international protests stopped them.

By late December 1944, the Russians were almost at the city. Raoul was now on the run himself, and he had to stay in a different place every night. Eichmann ordered the massacre of all the Jews remaining in the central ghetto, but Wallenberg sent a letter to General Schmidhuber, the man put in charge of the mass murder.

The note read: "If you do not stop this now, I can guarantee you will be hanged as a war criminal." The sixty thousand Jews in the ghetto were miraculously saved.

In January, 1945, the Russian army entered the city and halted the Nazi terror. Wallenberg set up a small department to find missing

Continued

MANY MEDALS HONOR WALLENBERG



The 42.5 mm-diameter medal was issued by the Raoul Wallenberg Society in Hungary in 1990 in .925 silver in memory of Raoul Wallenberg.

Continued

people and reunite families. Food and medicine would be needed, housing bedding and furniture. Raoul had plans for everything needed to restore normal life.

When the Russians arrived, he wanted to share his plans with them. He and his driver, Vilmos Langfelder, obtained a permit to meet with the Russian general.

Wallenberg left with a large suitcase, maybe containing money to obtain supplies and bribe more officials, maybe also some important documents.

Raoul innocently smiled, and waved goodbye to his friends and colleagues, for the last time. What happened to Raoul Wallenberg after that is unclear. One fact that is clear: Wallenberg was arrested; the Russian police probably thought of him as a spy.

The Swedish government, and

the American government failed to take action in finding Raoul Wallenberg. Amazingly, as the years passed by, the hero of Budapest was a forgotten man. There were various stories and rumors ... some said he was still in the Soviet Union, while others said he was dead.

Even the 1957 announcement by the Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Andrew Gromyko that Wallenberg had died of a heart attack in a Soviet prison 10 years earlier did not silence the questioning of Wallenberg's whereabouts.

To this day, Wallenberg's actual fate is unknown. But his legacy lives on forever.

In just six months of tireless work - from July 9, 1944 until January 17, 1945 - Raoul Wallenberg is officially credited with saving approximately 100,000 Jews from almost certain death. ▢

THE LIFE AND TRAGIC DEATH OF ...



The very rare "Box Thaler" medal of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer contains nineteen miniatures relating the significant moments of his life.

All photos courtesy TRADART, Brussels

EDITED BY MEL WACKS

Joseph Süß Oppenheimer was born at Heidelberg in 1698. Joseph had little inclination for study, but he showed a marked leaning toward business and obtained employment in large Jewish commercial houses in Frankfort-on-the-Main, Amsterdam, Prague, Vienna, and elsewhere, gaining an insight into the life of the nobility.

When Prince Carl became Duke of Württemberg (Dec., 1733), he found himself surrounded by many opponents, and his measures were

thwarted by intrigue.

On Jan. 9, 1734, the prince appointed Oppenheimer resident and privy factor. In conformity with an agreement made between the duke and Oppenheimer, the latter undertook the control of the mint.

Oppenheimer's management yielded unexpected profits, and the duke's confidence in him increased; while the opponents of the prince looked on with evil eyes as Oppenheimer's skill enriched the duke and conducted to suc-

Continued

... JOSEPH SÜSS OPPENHEIMER



Continued

cessful issues the various private financial enterprises entrusted to his management by his master.

Complaints were brought against Oppenheimer's management of the mint. He was accused of having minted coin below the standard and in quantities larger than those authorized, thus enriching himself and the duke. Oppenheimer therefore requested the duke to make a thorough examination and accounting) and asked to be relieved of the charge of the mint. After obtaining

the opinions of experts the duke publicly proclaimed that Oppenheimer had not caused the crisis at the mint.

In 1736, the duke issued a regulation which greatly excited the people of the country and which was laid at the door of Oppenheimer. This was the institution of commissions to examine into the conduct of certain officials, to fine them or remove them from office, to appoint new incumbents, and to

Continued

'COMMISSIONS' LADEN WITH MENACE

Continued

redistribute such positions.

These commissions became a menace; they led to blackmail and bribery. Some bribed the commissioners in order to be retained in office; others, to be appointed; others, to escape punishment or disgrace. A "Gratiamt" was established, where applications for positions were received; and the duke had permitted Oppenheimer to accept considerations from the applicants, he and his master dividing such receipts between them.

The sums collected by these devices had become so large toward the end of 1736 that the officials and the people, the Church and the aristocracy, the landowners and the merchants - in short, all who possessed or earned money - became more and more incensed at the proceedings of the tutelary council, the commissions, and the "Gratiamt," and every wrong was ascribed to the evil advice of Oppenheimer.

On January 18, 1737 the duke decreed that all salaries should be paid promptly and regularly by the chief pay-offices, which should always be furnished with the necessary sums by the privy councilor of finance (Oppenheimer), but that, in return, three kreutzer to the florin should be deducted from all salaries.

The excited people called this



Contemporary engraving of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, with gallows below.

deduction the "Judengroschen." The civil officials endeavored to secure the abolition of the "Judengroschen," but the duke explicitly confirmed his order in a decree of Feb. 1 following. It was furthermore planned to organize a bank in which all the moneys of the clergy and of ecclesiastical foundations should be deposited.

The suspicion of the Protestants that the duke was contemplating a coup d'état in order to make the Catholic religion that of the country was added to all those grievances.

Oppenheimer (the "Jew Süß") was taken to be the cause of it all; his luxurious life further exasperated the people, and a long statement

Continued

OPPENHEIMER TARGETED BY DUKE



Obverse of 42mm silver "Box Thaler" is inscribed : "JUD•JOSEPH•SÜS 1738 OPPENHEIMER;" the reverse inscription is: "AUS•DISEM•VOGEL•HAUS•SCHAUF•T•SUS•DER•SCHELM•HERAUS•" (From this aviary, the scoundrel Sus looks outside). It is estimated to sell for 10,000-12,000 euros.

Photographs courtesy TRADART

Continued

of grievances was sent to the duke with the object of bringing the Jew into disgrace.

But the duke declared, in a decree of Feb. 12, 1737, "that the Privy Councilor of Finance Oppenheimer was a faithful servant of his prince and of the state, and was intent in every way upon the welfare of both, for which he deserved the thanks of all. Since instead he was persecuted by envy and ill-will to such an extent that attempts were even made to bring him into disfavor with the duke, the latter accorded him his especial protection and expressly forbade the continuation of such attacks."

Yet Oppenheimer, recognizing the danger that threatened him, balanced his accounts, submitted them to the duke, who declared

them to be correct (March 8, 1737), and prepared to leave the country. On March 11, 1737, the duke called him to Ludwigsburg to spend the last night with him. At half-past nine that night the duke suddenly died. That same night all the Jews in Stuttgart, including Oppenheimer, were made prisoners.

After a futile attempt at flight he was taken to Neuffen and thence to Asperg, where, after having been tried, he was condemned to be hanged (Dec. 17, 1737).

On Dec. 4 Pastor Rieger had endeavored to convert him to Christianity, but Oppenheimer remained firm, although much weakened by imprisonment and much distressed mentally.

The sentence of death was

Continued

“I WILL DIE AS A JEW”

Continued

confirmed Jan. 25, 1738, by the administrator of the duchy, Prince Rudolph. Oppenheimer, who had no idea of the fate in store for him, was taken to Stuttgart Jan. 30, 1738, and on the next day his sentence was read to him, and he was admonished to repent and accept the Christian faith.

Oppenheimer, however, declared: “I will die as a Jew; I am suffering violence and injustice.” Again two ministers and a baptized Jew, a lector in Tübingen, made an attempt to convert him to Christianity, but Oppenheimer resisted firmly.

On Feb. 3 he prepared for death in the presence of the lector and of some Jews. The next day he was taken to the gallows specially erected for him, amid the rejoicing of thousands of people. A last attempt was made to convert him, but as it also proved fruitless, he was drawn up the ladder by the hangmen.

Crying aloud “Shema’ Yisrael,” he was forced into a cage fastened at the top, and the rope that had been placed around his neck was drawn. The rope was taken off after a quarter of an hour, and a chain was placed around his neck and the cage locked.

Those accused with him were not executed, their sentences being either remitted or mitigated. His death is now admitted by modern

historians to have been a judicial murder.

The *Jud Süß*, a historical novel by Lion Feuchtwanger and a masterpiece of German literature, met with international renown on its publication in 1925. Later, when anti-Semitism was looking for arguments wherever it could, Goebbels took the story and turned it into a Nazi propaganda film.

Satirical medals were issued following his execution and as a result of the popular resentment against him. TRADART, a Belgian auction house describes the medal as: “One side illustrated Oppenheimer’s pathetic end, locked up in an iron cage as he was moved to the gallows and the other, in striking contrast, his bust in all his haughtiness.”

The Oppenheimer medal is included in a Jewish-themed medals collection consisting of about a hundred specimens from the 16th to the 20th centuries, built over decades by the illustrious professional coin collector, Frank Sternberg, of Zurich.

These are being offered at auction in Brussels on November 20th. The catalog has a foreword written by Zahava Seewald, the Curator of the Jewish Museum of Belgium. □

Bibliography: The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1906 and press release from TRADART, November 20, 2014 auction catalog.

MYSTERY MEDAL NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

Can you help?
We would like to know more about the history and background of this unidentified medal. Please send any information you might have to the editor of *The Shekel*,
aperala@aol.com



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AINA AT THE ANA CHICAGO, 2014

*THE AMERICAN ISRAEL NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION
GAINS MEMBERS AT ANNUAL SUMMER CONVENTION*



AINA President Mel Wacks, top right, with Donna Sims; and seated left to right, AINA members Marcia Fregger, Steve Fregger and Herb Lippitz on the floor at the AINA table at the American Numismatic Association's 2014 World's Fair of Money in Chicago.

BY DONNA SIMS

The ANA selected the back area of the bourse floor for all the Club tables again this year.

I figured out this year that there are a few advantages to being located in such an out-of-the-way area, something I had not reflected upon in prior years. The No. One reason:

the close proximity to the restrooms (and getting to watch the shoe-shine guy dance around in-between shining shoes).

A couple of not-so-good reasons for this area include the fact that the cement floors are hard and uneven,

Continued

THE SHEKEL WINS TOP ANA AWARD AGAIN



For the second consecutive year, at the 2014 convention, The Shekel earned the American Numismatic Association's top honors in the Specialty Publication category for Club publications. Oded Paz receives the award on behalf of AINA from the ANA's District Representatives Coordinator Ms Sandy Hill.

Continued

and the older chairs still in use are far from being comfortable.

But I must say, meeting up with fellow club table people is always a joy and getting to chitchat is certainly a fun thing for me to do.

There seemed to be more kids coming around at the 2014 ANA summer convention this year doing the "Treasure Hunt" questions, and it is fun watching their minds at work trying to figure out what is the correct answer.

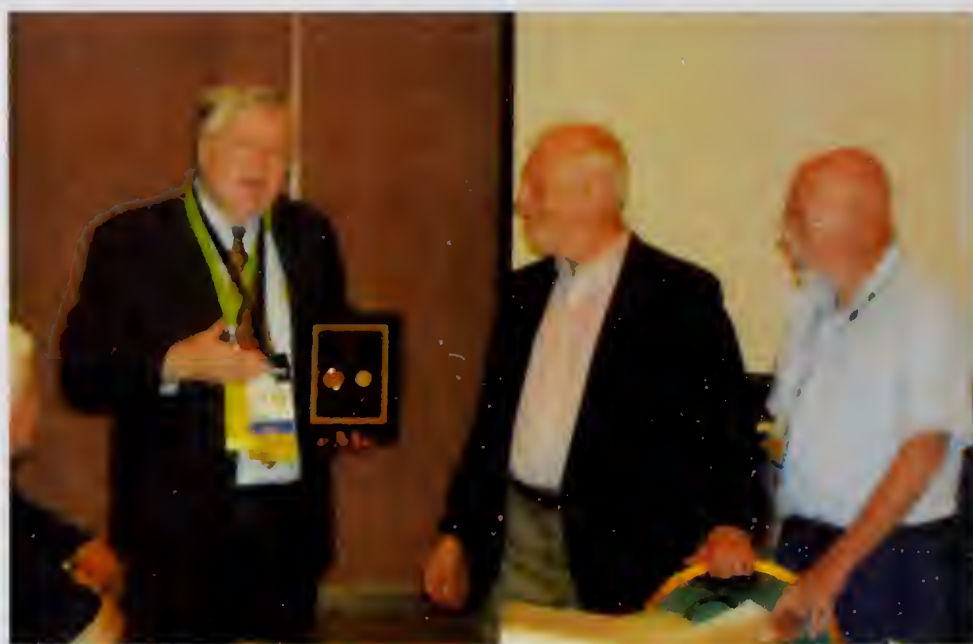
Traffic at the table this year was

again very busy. What a delight to meet up with several of our members, not only some local members, but two from Florida that we had met on our last AINA tour to Israel. Lots of catching up to do there.

The Israel Coins & Medals Corporation booth only had one person there in attendance whom I knew personally. I was finally able to grab a picture of Ron Reiss when he just happened to be there after my numerous attempts in trying to catch up with him.

Continued

ROBERT MESSING RECEIVES ODESSER AWARD



Above, Robert Messing receiving the Odesser award from Bob Leonard of TAMS (the Token and Medal Society) and AINA president Mel Wacks.



At left, Steve Feller and Dave Frank in a photograph taken after their slide presentation

Continued

This year AINA gained a total of 10 new members, including a junior member and a new life member. This brings our current total membership to 628.

The AINA board held its 2014 ANA meeting on Wednesday eve-

ning, August 6. Discussions held and decisions made were:

(1) AINA will still hold its annual dues for the upcoming year (2015) at \$25 domestic, \$35 foreign and \$10 for juniors.

(2) Having received no additional

Continued

AINA AT ANA 2014 A MEETING OF FRIENDS



AINA president Mel Wacks with new AINA member Marc Buslik of Chicago.



At left, AINA board member and current President of the ANA Walter Ostromecki with AINA treasurer and frequent contributor to The Shekel, Donna Sims.

Continued

names for this year's election of board members, the three current directors up for re-election were deemed duly re-elected – Josh Prottas, Roger Merritt and Ira Rezak.

(3) Named officers are: Mel Wacks, president, Josh Prottas, vice-president, Roger Merritt, secretary and Donna Sims, treasurer.

(4) AINA's upcoming annual medal will be "One Little Goat

– Two Zuzim", designed by Mel Wacks.

The AINA Forum meeting was held Thursday afternoon with many members and friends attending.

Ron Reiss of the ICMC began the meeting by giving an update of future coins and medals that will be issued in the not-too-distant future.

Next came the main part of the program with AINA member Steve Feller presenting a slide program on

Continued

AINA BUSINESS; EXHIBIT PRESENTATIONS

At right, the award ribbon and opening panel of AINA member, and frequent writer for The Shekel, Simcha Kuritzky and his exhibit that earned second place in the ANA Exhibit "Convention Theme" category ("Countries & Currency") also known as the Cliff Mishler Award for "Israel & Currency: Her Innovative Approach to the Question of Idolatrous Money."



At left, AINA treasurer Donna Sims with Cliff Mishler.

Continued

one of the many internment camps located throughout the States, this one being in Crystal City, Texas. His friend Dave Frank helped Steve with the presentation.

I knew that there were some camps located in California and Arizona, but never knew there had been one in Texas.

Steve's thorough insight into this particular camp was indeed mesmerizing and insightful.

Next on the program was Bob Leonard presenting the Ben and Sylvia Odesser Award to this year's recipient, AINA member Robert Messing. Congratulations Robert.

Overall, the AINA table remained busy for most of the time and all of us look forward to next year, 2015, back in Chicago! ☐

For more photos of AINA at the 2014 ANA World's Fair of Money in Chicago, please see next page!

AINA AT ANA 2014 WORLD'S FAIR OF MONEY



Above, a view inside the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont, Ill. and the entry into the American Numismatic Association's 2014 World's Fair of Money.

At right, Ron Reiss at the Israel Coins & Medals Corporation booth at the ANA's 2014 World's Fair of Money.





HALLOWEEN

DESIGN ON JAHF HOUDINI MEDAL



BY MEL WACKS

After medallist Hal Reed had created several medals for the Jewish-American Hall of Fame, he decided to use the unique rounded-trapezoidal shape for a medal of his own - celebrating Halloween.

When Reed showed the plaster models to JAHF

A section of medallic sculptor Hal Reed's medal for the Jewish-American Hall of Fame showing imagery of Halloween is shown above.

director Mel Wacks, Wacks said he loved the designs but they were not appropriate for a JAHF medal.

Years later, in 1996, when Mel Wacks was planning a

Continued

JAHF HOUDINI MEDAL EVOLVED OVER TIME



Above: The revamped Halloween design as it appeared on the Jewish-American Hall of Fame's Houdini medal. Bronze versions of the double medal are still available to collectors.

Continued

medal honoring Houdini, he recalled Reed's Halloween medal design and asked the medallist if he still had the plasters. Reed did. Wacks asked Hal Reed to design a two-part medal with the Halloween design in the middle, since the great magician, Houdini, had died on Halloween, and his wife led Halloween séances for many years to see if Houdini would return from the dead.

For the JAHF medal, Reed eradicated the word HOLLOWEEN (which he had misspelled), and modified the monsters in the background to produce a delightful medallic design. A poster that inspired some of the medal's design elements follows on the next page.

A few of the Houdini bronze double-medals are still available for \$200 by calling the Jewish-American Hall of Fame at (818) 225-1348. ▢



The original plaster design for the JAHF medal had Halloween misspelled as "Holloween."

POSTER INSPIRED MEDAL DESIGN



Some of the scary creatures on the Jewish-American Hall of Fame's Houdini medal were inspired by this poster.



GRANDMASTER OF ILLUSION; ESCAPE ARTIST EXTRAORDINAIRE; AVIATION PIONEER?

Magic is spooky. The rational mind doesn't "believe" in magic. Yet the best of magicians still capture our attention even while our inner scientist is screaming "Rubbish!"

As a word, magic fails to capture the full range of meaning people associate with events of the para-

normal. But there is one constant throughout - magic plays on our lack of understanding of what's really happening when we think we see it.

In many ways, it is ironic that Harry Houdini - considered today by many to be the all-time greatest magician, is forever linked to a day

Continued

PERTH MINT HONORED HOUDINI'S FLIGHT



Image courtesy Perth Mint

In 2010, the Perth Mint issued a one-ounce .999 fine silver Proof coin commemorative coin celebrating the 100th anniversary of flight in Australia, a first-flight pioneered by Erich Weiss, stage name Harry Houdini.

Continued

celebrated across the U.S. by kids of all ages, a day that embraces the supernatural and the magical, Halloween.

Spooky coincidence, indeed.

By the time of his death, of peritonitis from a burst appendix, Houdini had become the highest-paid actor in vaudeville, the premier stage for live performances at the crux of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Houdini was a performing magician. But he went to great lengths to distance himself from any supernatural abilities.

In his last year, Houdini testified before Congress on the charlatans who fleeced audiences with fake claims of connections to a realm beyond the living.

His fans adored his magic act,

even though magic played no part in Houdini's success, a career on stage that captured the admiration of millions over a span of 32 years. His secret was misdirection, deception of the eye, and some truly extraordinary physical abilities - like the ease with which he'd dislocate a shoulder to wriggle out of a straitjacket.

Audiences loved his act. And he played to what they paid for. Often, when his travelling show first arrived in a town, Houdini would invite the local sheriff or police captain to wrap him in a straitjacket and lock him in the jail.

Without fail, Houdini would escape.

Houdini's drive was relentless. he constantly sought more extreme examples of escape: again, the

Continued

DANGER FUNDAMENTAL IN HIS STAGECRAFT

*Image courtesy
The Library of Congress*

Houdini's "water torture" cell was his most advanced and visible "escape proof" box used in his stage acts. The box would be filled with water and secured with multiple locks.



Continued

straitjacket, then having his assistants wrap him in chains padlocked tight, then nailing shut the massive wood crate with him inside and then lowering the box, Houdini the chained human sardine, into the East River.

Houdini's drive to perform went beyond magic, though. Fascinated by the expanding awareness of the aeroplane, Houdini bought an agile French box kite flyer, shipped it to Australia and made aviation history in 1909 by becoming the first pilot to fly a plane in that vast southern

continent.

Curiously, as the Perth Mint acknowledges in its literature accompanying a 2010 one-ounce .999 fine silver Proof celebrating the centennial of flight in Australia, Houdini never flew again after his record-setting flights Down Under. He sold his biplane after his historic flight and returned home to the U.S. to remain landbound on stage.

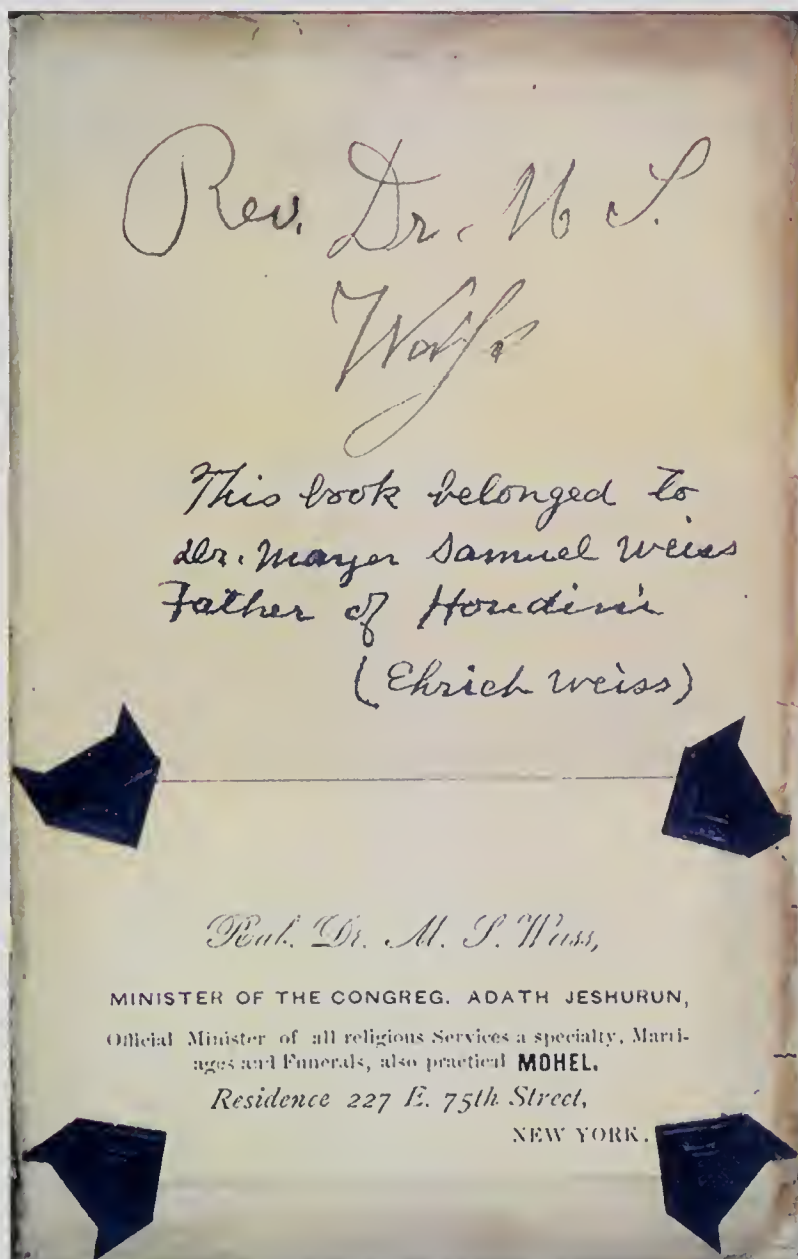
Great physical skill and mental agility were Houdini's tools of the trade. To escape from coffins and

Continued

HOUDINI'S FATHER A DISTINGUISHED RABBI

Image courtesy
Library of Congress

The Bible of Rabbi Samuel Weiss, Houdini's father, and signed by Erich Weiss, Houdini's real name. According to the Library of Congress, Houdini's real-name signature is one of the finest known, and the bibliographi information for Rabbi Weiss' Bible reads as follows: Bible. German. 1892. Die Bible, oder Die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments. New York: Amerikanische Bibel-gesellschaft, 1892.



Continued

giant bottles wrapped in multiple heavy-duty chains and massive padlocks, Houdini would dislocate his shoulders from their sockets, and then, with a key he usually secreted inside his mouth, unlock the straight-jacket's padlock and all other locks containing him.

In a more complex version of the stunt in his later years, Houdini would unlock the shackles that held him upside in a locked, glass-sided box filled with water.

Holding one's breath for up to

four minutes is a useful skill in this "magic" trick. Houdini was a master of holding his own breath, while causing the audience to collectively hold theirs.

What amazed audiences then, and now, was his ability to escape from containers wrapped on the outside with chains and padlocks. It wasn't magic, but careful preparation that allowed Houdini to secretly unlatch the padlocks and chains from within.

Indeed, Houdini was so set against the concept of paranormal magic that

Continued

HOUDINI ON MODERN COINS, MEDALS



A \$2 .925 fine silver commemorative coin issued in 2011 by the Micronesian island nation of the Republic of Palau. The 22mm diameter coin weighs 7.5 grams, was struck in Proof only with a mintage of 1,926 coins.

Continued

he revealed how spiritualists could create fake hands that would levitate during seances - an early version of today's reveals by the "magic" duo of Penn and Teller. ("Wizard Wars" on cable television takes this reveal concept a step further.)

Harry Houdini was born Erich Weiss in Budapest on March 24, 1874. He was one of seven children born to Rabbi Mayer Samuel and his wife. That same year, Rabbi Weiss moved his family to Appleton, Wisconsin, where he became the rabbi to a congregation on East College Ave.

In 1882, Rabbi Weiss became a U.S. citizen. The family's life was one of constant struggle, according to biographers. When Erich was 13, he moved to New York City with his father. They worked at menial jobs and lived in a boarding house until

the rest of the family could join them.

In New York City, young Erich became entranced by trapeze artists he saw in a performance.

He became enthralled with performing on stage. At age 20, in 1894, Erich Weiss changed his name to Harry Houdini and launched his career, first as a magician and then as an escape artist.

According to Biography.com, Erich Weiss selected the name Harry Houdini for two reasons: the first name is derived from his childhood nickname "Ehrie" and the last name is homage to a French magician he admired at that time, Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin. (Harry Houdini would later write "The Unmasking of Robert-Houdin," an essay that debunked Robert-Houdin's "magical" skills).

Continued

CURIOSITIES ABOUND WITH HOUDINI

Houdini's gravestone has an error sometimes found in numismatics: the date of his presidency of the American Society of American Magicians was inscribed incorrectly as 1927. Houdini died in 1926, and a newly inscribed 6 fails to cover the erroneous 7 of the date.



Continued

As Biography.com notes, “though his magic met with little success, he soon drew attention for his feats of escape using handcuffs. In 1893, he married fellow performer Wilhelmina Beatrice Rahner, who would serve as Houdini’s lifelong stage assistant under the name Beatrice “Bess” Houdini.”

With the eager participation of local constabulary, Houdini’s escapes attracted huge crowds, and he soon became the highest-paid performer on the vaudeville circuit.

Houdini played his role so well, and so diligently that the stage mantra “the show must go on!” took on a tragic meaning for him.

On Oct. 22, 1926, two college students visited Houdini before a scheduled performance.

One asked if it was true that he, Houdini, could “withstand any blow to the abdomen” and Houdini said yes, he could if was prepared. According to press reports of the incident, one of the students then

punched Houdini four times in the gut. The stoic Houdini absorbed the punches. But some type of injury had occurred.

Although in great pain, Houdini finished his performance. But he was not able to sleep for several days and when he finally did see a doctor, he was diagnosed with acute appendicitis and had a temperature of 102°.

Houdini had another performance scheduled that night and by the time he was ready to on stage he had a temp of 104°.

Still, Houdini performed his escape act. But immediately after the curtain dropped, he collapsed and was taken home.

He refused to see a doctor until the next day when he was wheeled into the operating room for an emergency appendectomy.

But it was too late. In the age before antibiotics, his infected appendix had burst, sparking a raging case of peritonitis. Surrounded by his wife and beloved brother, Houdini died the next day, Halloween 1926. ▢

A TIME BEFORE COINS

*INSCRIBED
HEBREW
WEIGHTS A
MONETARY
STANDARD
AS SET OUT IN
THE BIBLE*



BY HARVEY A. HERBERT

Did you ever wonder how business was transacted in ancient Israel before coins existed?

The answer: they used weights on a scale. These pre-measured weights were placed on one side of a balance scale while the item to be weighed, such as gold, was incrementally placed on the other side until the scale came into balance.

This article examines weights used in ancient Israel (Judah) around 700 B.C.E. before the

*All photos courtesy Harvey A. Herbert
A beqa, above, is a half-shekel stone weight.*

advent of coins. Actual examples of these weights are on display in the Living Torah Museum in Brooklyn, New York along with this author's entire collection of ancient Hebrew inscriptions from the Biblical period.

The weights have both religious (Biblical) and historical origins.

During the first Temple period (approximately 950-586 B.C.E.),

Continued

HISTORIC, BIBLICAL CONTEXT OF STONES

Continued

the Kingdom of Israel was first ruled by King David and then his son Solomon, who built the temple in Jerusalem. After his death, the kingdom split into Israel in the North and Judah in the South. The Assyrian invasion around 722 B.C.E. destroyed the kingdom of Israel and its inhabitants were exiled. Hence the “ten lost tribes.”

The kingdom of Judah miraculously survived under the leadership of King Hezekiah until the Babylonian conquest of 586 B.C.E. ending the First Temple period.

The Hebrew script used during this period is known as Ktav Ivri and the letters are totally different from the square letters which commenced with the Second Temple period until the present time.

The Hebrew Bible (Torah and Tanakh) recounts this history and describes the weights employed during this period. The book of Leviticus (Vayikra) states: “You shall not commit a perversion of justice, in measures of length, weight or volume. You shall have correct scales, correct weights...” (Lev. 19, 35-36). This is followed by a potent reminder: “I am Hashem, your G-d, who brought

you from the land of Egypt” (Lev. 19:76).

The great sage, the Chofetz Chaim, connects these two concepts: that any falsity of weights and measures is both unjust and a denial that there is a G-d who sees all.

The Torah further emphasizes not to have two weights, one of which is bigger than the other (Deuteronomy 25:13).

The book of Jeremiah describes the purchase of a field. “I weighed out the silver for him; several Shekalim...I weighed out the

silver on scales” (Jer. 32:911).

Silver in Hebrew is “keseiph” which also means money. Thus, we can see that silver/money was weighed on a scale to determine its measure in accordance with the strict religious directive for honesty in this regard.

Let’s look at the specific inscribed Hebrew weights in my collection, some of which are depicted here. These are dome shaped pieces of limestone which are inscribed on top in the ancient Hebrew script of that time, each indicating its value. Specifically, these weights are in the demarcation of shekel, beqa, gerah and

***‘ any falsity
of weights and
measures is both
unjust and a denial
that there is a G-d
who sees all. ’***

Continued

SHEKEL TERM USED WITH ANCIENT STONES



Four-shekel ancient stone weight used for weighing prior to purchasing prior to coinage. An Egyptian ankh is inscribed on the four-shekel weight.

Continued

pym all of which are described in the Bible.

The last weight – a netzef - is not mentioned in Scripture.

The shekel as a coin is well known to readers of this journal with the same name. Its origin dates back to Mesopotamian times when it was also a measure of weight.

Early in the Bible, Abraham came from that region to the holy land and weighed out 400 shekels of silver to buy the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron from Ephron the “Hittite” (*Genesis 23:16*).

My collection contains both two shekel and four shekel weights.

The Egyptian “ankh” sign is on the four-shekel weight which weighs 45.7 grams, while the two shekel weighs 22.2 consistent with the average weight of a shekel from this time period of 11.4 grams as set forth in David Hendin’s remarkable book: “Ancient

Scale Weights,” (p.86).

The obvious connection to the Egyptian system is clear from the ankh sign on the weights as well as an Egyptian icon on the Gerah weights mentioned later in this article. Around the same time period, royal jug handles from King Hezekiah’s reign depict two and four winged beetles - common Egyptian icons.

A half-shekel is a beqa. *Exodus 38:25-6* states “a Beqa for every head, a half Shekel in the sacred Shekel for everyone who passed through the census takers...”.

This was the Temple tax that everyone in ancient Israel was required to pay on a yearly basis. Also, Eliezer presented Rebecca with a golden nose ring with the weight of a Beqa... (*Genesis 24.20*)

The beqa (the half-shekel) in my collection weighs 6.272 grams, which if doubled weighs more than a gram over the shekel.

Continued

PYM STONE SOLVES BIBLICAL MYSTERY



A 6-gerah stone, equivalent in weight to three-tenths of a shekel, is at left. At right, with a weight of about one-third of a shekel, the pym is very rare, says the author.

Continued

This discrepancy can be explained by inaccuracies due to a lack of technology; but may perhaps represent a measure of generosity due to the sacred nature of the beqa as a mandatory contribution to the Temple.

There is some variation in all categories of those ancient Hebrew weights, which may be due to wear over the last 2,700 years.

The gerah is set forth in the Bible as one-twentieth of a shekel (*Numbers 3:47, Ki Sisa 30:13*).

My collection consists of 6- and 8-gerah. They also contain an Egyptian symbol.

A pym is mentioned in the Bible in the book of the prophet Samuel. It weighs about two-thirds of a shekel. This weight is very rare with probably only a dozen specimens in the world. Prior to

its discovery, religious scholars wondered for centuries about its meaning in the phrase: "there was a Pym that was used" (*Samuel I 13:21*).

Now, through the archeological discovery of this inscribed Hebrew weight, it is clear that this was the value the Jews had to pay the Philistines to sharpen their tools. This illustrates how archaeology can aid religious analysis.

Not mentioned in the Bible is the weight called a netzef which measures two-thirds of a shekel. This weight corresponds to a measure of weight in the Egyptian system as Hendin points out in his book.

All these weights are difficult to photograph and a personal viewing of the museum would be quite worthwhile.

It has been a personal privilege

Continued

BUT NETZEF IS NOT MENTIONED IN TEXT

Continued

to have been associated with Rabbi Shaul Shimon Deutsch director of the Living Torah Museum for over 10 years where my entire collection of ancient Hebrew inscriptions is presently housed after a sojourn at the Brooklyn Museum. Rabbi Deutsch is a great scholar of ancient Jewish coins and artifacts, as well as Jewish religion, who integrates all these fields brilliantly.

The Living Torah Museum, located at 1603 41st Street in Brooklyn, New York (Tel. 877-752-6286) has a spectacular collection of ancient Jewish coins as well as a word class collection of artifacts from the ancient world relating to the Torah and related Jewish scriptures and a must see for all readers of *The Shekel*.

In addition to the inscribed Hebrew weights, visitors can see the author's collection of Hebrew inscriptions which, modesty aside, is the foremost collection of its kind in the United States.

This includes inscriptions of Kings of Israel and Judah as well as the ministers as set forth in the Bible, and the only intact royal jug issued by King Hezekiah. Those unable to physically visit the Museum may purchase Museum books and videos. All of the animals and birds of the Bible are displayed in Torah Animal World, in the building next door to The



The netzef weighs about two-thirds of a shekel and is not mentioned in the Bible, says the author.

Living Torah Museum.

In summary, around 700 BCE, Judaeans employed pre-measured inscribed weights in lieu of coins, which were not yet extant. There is clearly a religious aspect to this in addition to the obvious domestic and foreign commercial use.

The author's collection represents a significant portion of these very rare artifacts. All readers of *The Shekel* are cordially invited to visit the Living Torah Museum and place an inscribed Hebrew weight on one side of a scale with ancient scale pans, and then place ancient ingots of silver on the other - this way, you can actually recreate a mode of commerce employed during Biblical times. ▢

Harvey A. Herbert is an attorney who resides in Brooklyn, New York. He invites questions/comments hh@harvherbertlaw.com

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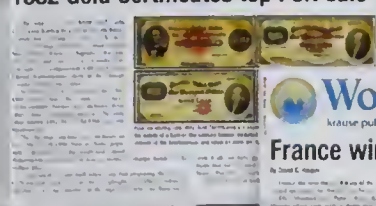
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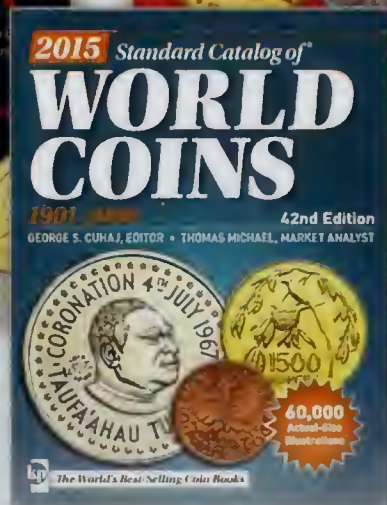
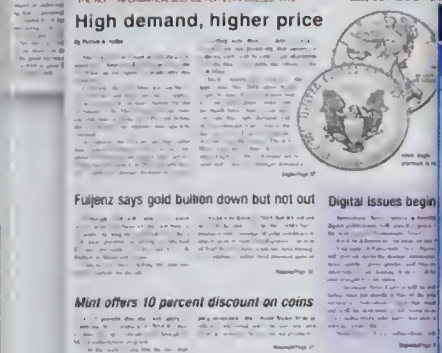
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2015 AINA Medal Features Little Goat

**Sent Free to Every AINA Member Paid Up for 2015
and All Life Members**



The Little Goat/Two Zuzim medal was designed by AINA President Mel Wacks, with artwork by Paul Conner. The AINA logo on the reverse was designed by Nat Sobel. Photo courtesy of Coin World.

The most famous goat in Jewish households around the world is featured on the 2015 medal issued by the American Israel Numismatic Association. This medal is dated in the Lunar-Zodiac “Year of the Goat,” perhaps making it the first Jewish Lunar-Zodiac commemorative! One medal will be sent free to every AINA member in good standing in 2015. Only 850 prooflike brilliant uncirculated 30mm brass medals have been made by the Highland Mint.

The song “Chad Gadya” has been sung at the end of every Passover Seder (meal) for at least 500 years; it goes as follows: “*One little goat, one little goat/My father bought for two zuzim./ One little goat, one little goat./ Then came a cat and ate the goat/ My father bought for two zuzim./ One little goat, one little goat./ Then came a dog and bit the cat,/ That ate the goat/ My father bought for two zuzim./One little goat, one little goat.*” ... and so on. According to the commentators, this song illustrates how the people of Israel (represented by the young goat) were for centuries oppressed and persecuted by all the nations of antiquity, and how the oppressors all perished one by one, and how Israel, the oppressed, survived.

In addition to picturing the young goat, “Two Zuzim” appears on the medal. “Zuzim” were coins only in the time of the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE) when Roman denarii were overstruck with Jewish designs.